
Maria Simmonds-Gooding - Biography

Maria Simmonds-Gooding was born in India in 1939 and has lived in Dunquin, Co. Kerry since 1947. In 1962/63 she attended the National College of Art & Design, Dublin and Le Centre de Peinture, Bruxelles and the Bath Academy of Art from 1966 to 68. Since that time she has worked full-time as an artist on the Dingle peninsula. She has exhibited widely and her work is in numerous collections.

Try to consider these questions about *Cliff Dwelling*

1. This is not a painting, what do you think it's made of?
2. When you look closely at this you can see marks and lines, what do these marks mean?
3. Texture is one of the first terms that come to mind when looking at this piece of art. What other terms you can think of and how would you use them to describe the piece? (Consider the framing).
4. Why is colour not used in this work?
5. In what way does this work relate to the tradition of recognisable picture making?
6. The blank page or canvas can be one of the most intimidating surfaces for an artist or writer. It is interesting that the reaction to a blank surface can be to cover it entirely, or to exploit its essential characteristics by making subtle and precise interventions. Thematically this can be seen as a microcosm of all art. How far can this notion be stretched, is a totally untouched page a work of art?

On the reverse of this sheet is a short one-page exercise to assist you while looking at the painting. It comprises of five questions. Feel free to fill it out and take it home with you or you can simply use the questions in your mind as prompts to look at the painting more thoroughly. (If you do fill it out, please tell a member of staff so we can replace it for the next visitor)

1. Answer the first question, "Like/Dislike", with just one of these two words.
2. The next one is "Description", here describe all the physical details you can about the painting such as the name of the artist; the title; medium; dimensions as well as how the paint is applied and so on.
3. For the next one "Imagery", note down what the painting is of. For example Barrie Cooke's Two Lough Key Islands might include, "an island in mist, sort of abstracted, out in the lake but sort of floating in the painting" or Blaise Drummond's *Wreck of Hope* might include "a passenger aeroplane flying through a circular gap in stormy clouds in the centre of the painting. The plane is very small for the size of the painting" Describe as much as you can, everything you notice such as the choice of colours, the position of things in the painting and so on.
4. In the next one "Interpretation". Try to figure out what the artist was trying to communicate, what they meant by putting these things on the canvas, why are they there, what does the choice of colours signify, how does one bit relate to another, what was the artist feeling? Think about this for a couple of minutes before you come to your conclusions.
5. Finally you come to "Like/Dislike" again, but this time rather than just one word, give a sentence or two about your answer.